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*Christ, the Object of God's eternal Delight :
And the Church, the Object of Christ's
everlasting Delight,*

EXPLAINED and PROVED.

IN A

S E R M O N

Preached near *Devonshire-Square,*

TO THE

S O C I E T Y,

Who SUPPORT the

Wednesday-Evening-Lecture.

December 31, 1760.

Published at their Request.

By J O H N B R I N E.

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PROV. VIII. 30, 31.

Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; I was daily His Delight, rejoicing always before Him: Rejoicing in the habitable Part of His Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.

THAT the Divine Speaker, in this Context, is a Person, it is clear from the personal Characters, under which He speaks concerning Himself, and the personal Acts, which He expresses of Himself. And it is equally evident, that this Speaker is Christ, who is the Wisdom as well as the Power of God. For, the Things expressed, are true of Him only.

In the Text, the following Things are to be observed: That Christ existed by God,—as one brought up with Him.—That He was daily his Delight.—That He rejoiced in the habitable Part of his Earth.—And that his Delights were with the Sons of Men.

I. CHRIST existed by GOD. *Then I was by Him.* When He was present with the Father, appears from the Words immediately

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diately preceeding the Text. It was when *He*, the Father, gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his Commandment : When He appointed the Foundations of the Earth. Christ was by, or, existent with God the Father, when He exerted His Power, in the Creation of the World. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.* And He was present with the Father, as a Co-operator, in Creation. For, *all Things were made by Him, and without Him was not any Thing made, that was made (a).* All Things were created by Him, as an efficient Cause, and for him (b) as a final Cause.

The Divine Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms, that *He who built all Things is God (c).*

Christ, therefore, if that Assertion is Truth, must be God, or a divine Person. For, He made all Things. No one Thing was made without Him. As the Word was with God, so, the Word was God. Our Saviour *is God over all, blessed for ever (d).* He *is the true God, and eternal Life (e).* The Father's Equal. For, *He being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God (f).* And He being such, He was a joint-Agent with the Father, in the Work of Creation. He was then by Him, not as an inactive Spectator

(a) John i. 1, 2.

(c) Heb. iii. 4.

(e) John v. 20.

(b) Col. i. 16.

(d) Rom. ix. 4.

(f) Philip. i. 20.

The Church Christ's everlasting Delight. 3

Spectator of what He wrought ; but as a Co-operator with Him, in giving Existence unto whatsoever is.

II. Christ was by the Father, as *One brought up with Him*. Which I apprehend denotes two Things. 1. The Character He bore, or the Capacity wherein He then stood. 2. The Intimacy, and sweet Converse He then had with the Father. 1. I conceive, that this respects Christ in His mediatorial Capacity, or considered as God-man. He was the Object of the Father's Choice, to act in the Office of Mediator between Himself, and the Church. It was his Will, that He should assume our Nature, or become Man. And the Will of Christ concurred with the Will of the Father herein. And, therefore, He *verily was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World; but was manifest in these last Times(g)*. By Reason whereof, He was considered and held in Repute, as God and Man, from everlasting, though neither Part of his human Nature then subsisted. Not his Soul, any more than his Body. For, it was not possible, that either constituent Part of his human Nature should subsist in Eternity, when the Counsel and Covenant of Peace were held and entered into, between the Father and Himself. But that is no Objection, unto His being then, viewed and considered, as God and Man. Because the present Sub-

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sistence of his human Nature, was not necessary to such a View and Consideration of Him. For, the Father's Appointment, that he should become Man, and his Concurrence, were a sufficient Ground for such a View and Consideration of Him. 2. I apprehend, that this Phrase, *as One brought up with Him*, signifies, that Intimacy and sweet Converse, which He then had with the Father, in his mediatorial Character. He was *in the Bosom of the Father*, and privy to all the gracious and glorious Designs of his everlasting Love, concerning the Elect. *The Father loved the Son, and shewed Him all Things, that Himself doth (b)*. And Christ in his mediatorial Capacity, it was then agreed on, fixed and settled, should carry his Purposes of Grace into Execution. Thus he, from everlasting, enjoyed the greatest Intimacy and sweetest Converse with the Father, in his mediatorial Capacity, he being then, by him, *as one brought up with him*, in that Capacity.

III. Christ, in the Character of Mediator, *was daily, or Day by Day*, as *Arias Montanus* renders it (כ"י כ"י) His Delight. This Phrase does not denote Succession. For, there was not a Succession, in Eternity past. The Import of it is this: That Christ, from everlasting, was *constantly* the Object of the Father's Delight, in his mediatorial Capacity, or, considered by him
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(b) John v. 20.

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as God and Man. Being Man, he was, 1. Capable of obeying. *He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham. For as much as the Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself, likewise took part of the same (i).* As Man, He was meet and fit, to become subject to the Covenant of Works. And, he actually came under its Obligation. For, as *he was made of a Woman, so, also, he was made under the Law, to redeem his People, who were under the Law (k).* And by Reason of the absolute Purity and Perfection of his Nature, he was able to yield Obedience to the Law, in the utmost Extent of its Commands. And, therefore, in his human Nature, he was the Object of the Father's Delight.

2. As Man, he was capable of suffering penal Death, in order to the Redemption of the Church. For, (1.) As such, he was a fit Subject to bear their Sins, and he really did. *He knew no Sin; but was made Sin for us (l).* The Father laid on him the Iniquities of us all (m). And he bore our Sins, in his own Body on the Tree (n). The Guilt of his People, was charged on him, and he bore it away. For, *he put away their Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself (o).* Which he could not have done, without the Assumption of their Nature, into
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(i) Heb. ii. 16.

(l) 2 Cor. v. 21.

(n) Heb. ix. 26.

(k) Gal. iv. 4.

(m) Isa. liii. 6.

(o) 1 Pet. i. 24.

union with his divine Person. (2.) He also was capable of bearing the Law's Curse, in his human Nature. As Man, he not only came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, respecting the Obedience which it requires; but also, to suffer the Malediction which it threatens. And in his sufferings and Death, he was made a Curse. That which we are redeemed from, he was made upon our Account, we are redeemed from the Curse of the Law, and, therefore, he was made a Curse. *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us (o).* And therefore, there is now no Condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh but after the Spirit (p).

His human Nature only, was capable of being made a Curse, and, consequently, if he had not been Man, he could not have effected our Redemption from the Curse, of the Covenant of Works, by which we stand condemned, for our Violation of it. (3.) Christ being Man, he was a fit Subject to bear the vindictive Displeasure of God. And he actually did bear it for us. Wherein are two Things to be observed, [1.] Dereliction and Withdrawment, as to present Communion, and a delightful Sense of divine Favour, which Christ always enjoyed, until the Time of his sufferings; but then the Father,

(o) Gal. iii. 13.

(p) Rom. viii. 1.

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Father hid his Face, and withdrew from him, which caused him to utter that sore Complaint, when on the Cross: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me* (q). [2.] Suffering divine Wrath and Vengeance. The Father in the Character of a Judge, *bruised and put him to Grief* (r). By positive Acts, which he immediately put forth on his Mind, he impressed a deep Sense of the Guilt, which was imputed to Him, upon his Soul, and produced in him a most painful Sensation of its Demerit. He commanded *the Sword of Justice to awake against and smite him* (s). Thus he *spared him not* (t); but took full Vengeance on Sin in him: That he might spare, pardon and save his People, without Dishonour to his Law, and eclipsing the Glory of his Holiness and Justice. Not that Christ had the least Conscientiousness of the Contraction of Guilt, or of his Person being the Object of the Father's Displeasure. Neither of which, was possible. And the Father was never more delighted with Christ, than, when he presented himself a willing Victim, before divine Justice, to make Atonement for our Sins. Now, if Christ had not assumed human Nature, he had not been a meet Subject for Suffering on Account of the Sins of Men. But by the Assumption of our Nature, he became a
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(q) Psal. xxii. 1.

(s) Zech. xiii. 7.

(r) Isa. liii. 10.

(t) Rom. viii. 32.

fit and proper Subject of Suffering for our Offences. And, therefore, in his human Nature, he was the Object of the Father's Delight.

3. Christ being God, as well as Man, and the divine and human Natures, being ineffably united in him, he was capable of meriting, both in what he did and suffered. If he had been Man only, he might have obeyed, and also have suffered, but he could not have merited, either in obeying, or suffering. As the *very learned and accurate* Divine, *Witrius* observes : *A mere Man, might have been upheld by infinite Power, in Obedience and Suffering**. But no proper Merit could possibly attend, either his Obedience, or his Sufferings, how great soever. Infinite Power, resident in the divine Person of Christ, sustained his human Nature, in his Obedience and Sufferings ; but the Union of his human Nature, with his divine Person, renders his Obedience, and Sufferings properly meritorious. If he had not been Man, he would not have been a meet Subject to obey the Law on the Account of Men, nor to suffer a penal Death for the Sins of Men. And if he had not been God and Man, and both united, he could not have merited, by his Obedience, or Suffer-

* *Deus Naturam humanam, personaliter sibi non unitam, Divina Virtute qua ita sustentare queat, ut farendis & vincendis omnibus Doloribus par sit.* *ÆCON Fœd. Lib 11. Cap. 4. Sect. XXII.*

Sufferings. For, it is the infinite Dignity of his Person, which gives infinite Worth to his Obedience, and from that arises the immente Value of his Sufferings. Thus the Constitution of the Person of Christ fits him, for carrying into Execution all the wise and glorious Purposes of the Father, concerning the Objects of his everlasting Love. And, he having such a View of him, in Eternity, his Soul then delighted in him (*u*). Because the Father, from everlasting, foresaw, how he himself, would be infinitely glorified, and the Church be effectually secured, by the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ, therefore, he, eternally had the highest Complacency and Delight in Him.

IV. Christ rejoiced *always* before the Father. *Arias Montanus* translates it literally, *in all Time*: According to the Original (בְּכָל עֵית). Here we must observe, as before, that Time, or Succession, had not Place in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past. We have no Language, by which, Eternity may be properly expressed, nor can have. The Reason whereof, is clear. It surpasses our Comprehension. I apprehend, that the more seriously, and fixedly, any Man contemplates Eternity, the more evidently he will discern, that it exceeds his most enlarged Ideas. Our Ideas may possibly exceed our Language, but our Language, if we understand it, cannot exceed

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(*u*) Isa. xlii. 1.

our Ideas. As our Minds are finite, and limited, it is impossible, that our Conceptions should be extended unto Infinity. And, therefore, none of the Sons of Metaphysics, are able to explain what Eternity is. The Idea which we have of it, is not positive; but negative. It is, we know not what. God, who alone is Eternal, only knows what Eternity is. The Import of the original Phrase, *in all Time*, is, perpetually, without any Interruption, or Intermission. Christ, in the Character of Mediator, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past, constantly rejoiced before the Father. I would shew, in some Particulars, what was the Matter of his Joy : Or, wherein he then did rejoice.

1. The Matter of his Joy, from everlasting, was his human Nature, as fitted to accomplish, in Union with his divine Person, the whole Will of the Father. That Individuum of human Nature, which was ordained unto a personal Union with the eternal Son of God, was meet and fit to be taken by him, into such a Union with himself. The Father *prepared him a Body (w)*, a Nature. As Man, he was the curious Workmanship of the Holy Ghost. And, therefore, he was perfectly qualified, for being thus united with his divine Person, not only because he was all Purity and Perfection ; as he was the miraculous Production of the blessed Spirit,

(w) Heb. x. 5.

Spirit, and, so, *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners* (x): But also, because, he was replenished with all the supernatural Graces and Gifts of the holy Spirit, in their utmost Perfection and Plenitude. And by the Assumption of that Nature, it became his own, in a peculiar Sense. In Consequence of which, infinite Power, resident in his divine Person, became engaged, to support, and carry that Nature, through the whole of its Obedience and Sufferings. Hence, it was impossible, that he should *fail*, in either. And, as was before observed, the infinite Dignity of his Person, gave immense Value, to his Obedience and Sufferings. Wherefore, by both, the Will of the Father is accomplished, which he undertook to perform. And the highest Glory redounds to all his glorious Perfections thereby. The Fore-view, and Prospect, which Christ had thereof, in the eternal Counsel and Covenant of Peace, was Matter of infinite Joy to him. The Constitution of his Person, as Mediator, fitting him for carrying into Execution, the wise, holy, and gracious Purposes of the Father, he rejoiced therein, from everlasting. For, he ever *delighted to do his Will* (y).

2. The Glory, which he then knew, that he should bring to the Father, by the Accomplishment of his Will, in our Nature,

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(x) Heb. vii. 26.

(y) Psal. xl. 8.

was the Matter of his Joy. The Father is glorified, by the Son, as Mediator, in the highest Manner, in all his infinitely glorious Attributes. In his absolute Sovereignty, boundless Grace, Kindness and Mercy: In his immense Wisdom, infinite Holiness and Justice, in his Power, and in his eternal Truth and Faithfulness. Yea, the Glory of all his Perfections, shines forth most conspicuously in the Constitution of the Person of Christ, and in his Performance of the Father's Will, in our Nature: Hence, our Lord speaking to him, expresses himself thus: *I have glorified thee on the Earth; I have finished the Work, which thou gavest me to do* (z). That View, which Christ had thereof, when he undertook to accomplish his Will, in the everlasting Covenant of Grace, was Matter of infinite Joy to him. For, therein, he eternally rejoiced.

3. The Salvation and Happiness of the Church, were the Matter of his Joy. The Glory of the Father, and the Recovery, and eternal Felicity of his People, were *the Joy*, that was *set before him*, which caused him, *to endure the Cross, and despise the Shame* (a); at the Time of his Crucifixion. And he rejoiced in both, when he agreed to make his *Soul an Offering for Sin* (b). Which he did, from everlasting, in that Covenant, where-

(z) John xvii. 4.

(a) Heb. xii. 2.

(b) Isa. liii. 10.

whereinto, he entered with the Father, relating to the Salvation of the Elect. That which animated him, in his Sufferings, gave him Joy, when he undertook to suffer and die, which was the Glory of God the Father, and the endless Bliss of those for whom he suffered and died. And, therefore, in Eternity, he always rejoiced before the Father, in the View which he then had of both. The Thoughts which he had before Time, of glorifying his Father, and saving the Objects of his Love, afforded him, without Intermission, infinite Pleasure and Joy.

4. Christ then rejoiced in the Dignity and Glory, which he, himself, was to enjoy, upon finishing that Work, which the Father gave him to do. He prayed for the Possession of it, when he was about to suffer, saying, *Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the Glory, which I had with thee, before the World was* (c). As hath been before observed, he existed with the Father, from everlasting, in his mediatorial Capacity, though neither constituent Part of his human Nature, then subsisted. The present Subsistence of either Part of that Nature, was not necessary unto his standing, and being considered, in that Capacity. The Glory for which our Lord prayed, was not that which is essential to his Divine Person; but his mediatorial Glory. Which he had with the
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the Father, before the World was, in Promise and Grant. For, as the Father, in the everlasting Covenant, assigned him Work, he also promised him a Reward. And that *Reward* was ever *with him*, or present to his View, as *his Work* was always *before him*. And he eternally rejoiced in the Prospect which he had, of that immortal Dignity, unto which his human Nature was advanced, when he had compleated the Work of Redemption. These important and glorious Things, were the Matter of the eternal Joy of Christ, existing with the Father, in his mediatorial Capacity. The Meetness of his human Nature, for a Subsistence, in his Divine Person, and his Fitness, by Reason thereof, to accomplish effectually, the whole Pleasure of the Father, concerning the Objects of his sovereign, eternal, and infinite Love. That Revenue of Honour and Glory, which the Father receives, by the Obedience, Suffering and Death of his human Nature, as subsisting in his Divine Person. The everlasting Security, consummate, and endless Felicity, of all those among the Sons of Men, whom he most intensely loved. And that State of Dignity, and Glory, unto which his human Nature was advanced, when he had finished the Work allotted to him, by the Father, in the Capacity of Mediator. They are the noblest, and most grand Effects of immense Wisdom. And, therefore, fit Matter
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of the Joy of Christ. These Things are *the Wisdom of God, in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom, which he ordained, before the World to our Glory*(c). Hence, the View, which Christ had of them, in the eternal Counsel of Peace, held between the Father, and Himself, gave him infinite Pleasure *always*, without the least Interruption, or Intermission.

V. Christ *rejoiced in the habitable Part of the Father's Earth.* The Earth is his. For, he created, and upholds it. He is *the Creator of the Ends* thereof (d). *The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof: The World, and they who dwell therein* (e). *Heaven, yea, the Heaven of Heavens, is the Lord's: The Earth he hath given to the Children of Men.* He permits them to possess it, and the Treasures of it. *The habitable Part of the Earth*, designs those Parts thereof, which are inhabited by the Objects of his peculiar Love. He is an everlasting Father to his People, and most tenderly loves them. He, therefore, rejoiced in those Places, which his Children would reside in, during their mortal State. Christ is the Husband of the Church, and hath the greatest Affection for her. Hence, he rejoiced, in those Spots of Ground which she were to dwell in, until he took her, to his Embraces, in the heavenly Mansions. O what a tender Thought does this Phrase express!

(c) 1 Cor. ii. 7.

(d) Isa. xl. 28.

(e) Psal. xxiv. 1.

press! The Joy which the Mediator had in this World, in Eternity, arose from this Consideration, that it was to be the Place, wherein, his People were to rise into Existence, and abide, until they were made meet for the everlasting Enjoyment of himself, in another, and infinitely better World than this.

VI. His *Delights were with the Sons of Men*. The radical Letters, in the original Word, are doubled (*ywyw*), which increase its Signification. Great Delight is meant. Farther, it is in the plural, not the singular Number. So that, according to the Idiom of the original Language, it is to be understood, in the superlative Sense: The highest Delight is intended. Hence we must conclude, that the Love of Christ to his People, was, from everlasting, a Love of Complacency and Delight. And not merely a Love of Benevolence or Pity. Some, perhaps, will say, why is this *Antinomian* Tenet advanced? That Christ delights in his People, before they become Subjects of Holiness. How is that possible? It is not *Antinomianism*; but a glorious, evangelical Truth, which I hope to explain in such a Manner, as to place it above all reasonable Objection. The Persons with whom his Delights were, *are the Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven (g)*. Those whom the Father loved, chose, and gave

gave unto Christ, to be saved by him. To whom He was appointed a Head. Who are *his Members, his Body and Fulness (b)*. His Children. Those *many Sons*, whom God designed *to bring to Glory (i)*. They are the Persons, with whom the Delights of Christ were, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past. In order to explain this important Point, I observe, that Christ had, from everlasting, a twofold View of his People.

1. In the Counsel of Peace, which was held between the Father, and Himself, he viewed, and considered his People, as lapsed, depraved, guilty, and therefore, miserable. I suppose, that good Men, who agree not with us, in the Point, which I am about to prove, will grant the Truth of this. Because, the Denial of it, would evert entirely, the precious Doctrine of a Counsel, and Covenant of Peace, being held, and entered into, from everlasting, between God, and Jesus Christ, wherein, infinitely wise, and effectual Provision, was made, for their Recovery and Salvation. Now, let me ask our good Brethren, whom I much honour and esteem, if Divine Benevolence and Compassion, respected them, as Criminals, and guilty, or, as miserable, in Consequence of their Guilt? Surely, they will not say, that Divine Benevolence, and Compassion, respected

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(b) Eph. i. 23.

(i) Heb. ii. 10.

them, as Criminals, and guilty, but as miserable, in Consequence of their Guilt.

Human Benevolence, and Pity, to an Offender, do not respect him, as such; but as obnoxious to suffering Penalty, for his Offence. No wise and just Judge will ever bear good Will to, and pity a Malefactor, as so considered; but only as he is subjected to Condemnation, for his Breach of the Law. Much less, is it possible with God, *who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; to bear good Will unto, or pity Transgressors of his righteous Law, as so considered. Sinners as Sinners, are not Objects of Divine Benevolence and Compassion; but of Divine Disapprobation. Infinite Mercy and Compassion, are extended and exercised towards sinful Men, yet not under the Consideration, of their being Criminals, but under the Consideration of their being miserable, in Consequence of their Crimes. God and Christ, do not pity Sinners, as Sinners; but as they are obnoxious to Misery, on Account of their Sins. We do not say, that Christ delighted in his People, considered, as Sinners. Nor, that he took Pleasure in them, as liable to Misery, in Consequence of their Sins. If we affirmed the one or the other, we might be justly charged with Absurdity. So far are we from asserting either, that we deny, that the People of Christ, are the Objects of his Benevolence and Pity, viewed and
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considered, by him, as Sinners. And maintain, that his Pity to them, regards them only, under the Consideration of their being miserable, and not of their Guiltiness. Viewed by him, as Guilty, they are not the Objects of his Compassion; but of his Disapprobation. But that is no Objection to the Truth of what, I am now engaged, in the Defence of. If Christ had no other View of his People, in Eternity, than, as guilty and miserable, it must be granted, that they then, could not be the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

For it is not possible, that he should ever take the least Pleasure in them, considered as guilty, and involved in Misery. But, I hope to make it evident, that, from everlasting, he had another and very different View of them. I suppose, that it will be allowed, that a Counsel and Covenant of Peace, were held, and entered into, between the Father and Christ, before the Commencement of Time, wherein, the Salvation of the Church, was fully provided for, and effectually secured. I persuade myself, that our good Brethren, who object to the Doctrine of Christ's everlasting Delight in his People, will not call the Truth of either into Question. Because, if they are not granted, we must conclude, that God and Christ, in Eternity, did not concern themselves about the Salva-

tion and Happiness of the Church. That Christ was not appointed and constituted Mediator That no federal Transactions passed between the Father and Christ, before Time, relating to the important Affair of the Redemption of his People. But surely, the precious Doctrine of an everlasting Covenant of Grace, being entered into, by the Father and Jesus Christ, for the Security, final, and endless Happiness of the Church, will not be parted with ; out of Opposition to the Sentiment of Christ's delighting in his People, before Time. I apprehend, that an impartial, and candid Consideration, of the federal Transactions, of the Father and Christ, from everlasting, will oblige us to conclude, that it is true, that he then had such a View of his People, as was infinitely pleasing and delightful to him.

2. That the Prospect, which Christ had of his People, in the eternal Counsel, and Covenant of Peace, was a pleasing one to him, will evidently appear, by the Consideration of the following Particulars.

(1.) He therein viewed them, as washed in his Blood, and so clear of all Guilt. The Father, in the everlasting Covenant, required Christ to *lay down his Life* for his People. It was his Will, that he should *make his Soul an Offering*, for their Sins. That he should *shed his Blood*, in order to their Remission.

mission. Christ, on his Part, agreed, and became engaged, to suffer and die for them. Hence, he was under Obligation, to submit to Suffering and Death. *Ought not Christ to have suffered those Things?* Upon this Account, his Blood, is called *the Blood of the everlasting Covenant*. The Church, as washed in his Blood, is without Spot, or wrinkle, or any such Thing. Since, this was an Article fixed and settled, between the Father, and the great Mediator, in the Covenant of Grace, it is reasonable to conclude, that Christ then had a View of his People, as clear of all Guilt. For, surely, it cannot be a Mistake, to think, that he, from everlasting, fore-saw what would be the Issue of his Sufferings and Death, respecting the Persons, for whom, he undertook to suffer and die. And that Fore-view, which he then had of them, doubtless, was infinitely pleasing, and delightful to him. If any will say, that Christ had not, in Eternity, a View of his People, as purged from the Guilt of Sin, in Virtue of his atoning Blood and Sacrifice, I conceive, that they will be obliged to deny, that the Affair of his Death, was an Article agreed on, from everlasting, between the Father, and himself. As freed from the Guilt of Sin, they ever were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

(2.) He

(2.) He delighted in his People, from everlasting, as he beheld them clothed, with the Robe of his Righteousness, and constituted righteous thereby. The Righteousness of the Saints, whereby they are justified, is compared, on account of its Purity, to fine Linnen, clean and white. *Unto her it was granted, to be arrayed with fine Linnen, clean and white, which is the Righteousness of Saints.* Therefore, as they are invested therewith, they, *are all fair, and without Spot ; perfect, through that Comeliness, which is put upon them.* This Righteousness, for its Value, and curious Texture, is comparable to wrought Gold. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within, her Clothing is of wrought Gold.* Because, of its Splendor, it is comparable to the Sun. The Church, in regard to her Sanctification, is *fair as the Moon ;* but in respect to her Justification, *she is clear as the Sun.* Most splendid and glorious. Now Christ, in the Covenant of Peace, undertook to work out, and bring in this *Garment of Salvation, this Robe of Righteousness,* for his People. Having then, a View of them, as *naked,* and destitute of a justifying Righteousness, in themselves. For, Obedience to the Law, was required of him, by the Father, as well as suffering its Curse. And he agreed to fulfil the Father's Will in both. Hence, he not only, was to *make Reconciliation for Iniquity ;* but also, to *bring in*
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everlasting Righteousness. His undertaking to do the Latter for his People, is a clear Proof, that they were then, present to his View, in their own *filthy Garments*. And if, from everlasting, he beheld them, as unrighteous in themselves, may we not conclude, that they were present to his View, in Eternity, as clothed with *change of Raiment*, whereby, they are constituted righteous? And if they were so viewed, and considered by him, surely, they were, under that View, and Consideration, the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

(3.) Christ took Pleasure, in his People, from everlasting, as he beheld them beautified with the Graces of the Holy Spirit. The Saints are internally beautiful, as such. They are the happy Subjects of a lovely Image, which is delightful and pleasing to Christ. For, it is the Image of himself. The Graces of Faith, Hope, Love, and a holy Fear of God, are very ornamental to them. On account thereof, they are denominated, *the Excellent in the Earth*, in whom is *all Christ's Delight*. In the eternal Counsel and Covenant of Peace, he had a View of his People as adorned with those Graces. That, therein, he beheld them, as naturally depraved, and destitute of Holiness, will, I suppose, be freely granted. It cannot be denied, if it

it is allowed, that it was a Point settled, in that Covenant, that he should become Sanctification to his People, by a Communication of Holiness to them. Which cannot surely be called in Question; because, their holy Vocation, or Regeneration, and Sanctification, are according unto Grace, which was given them, *in him, before the World began* (k). And that Grace was given, in the everlasting Covenant, which was entered into, between the Father, and himself, as the Mediator, and Head of the Church. Is it not evident from hence, that Christ had a twofold View of his People, in the everlasting Covenant, one, as unholy, and the other, as adorned with Grace and Holiness? No Difficulty attends conceiving, that they were present to his View, in Eternity, as sinful. And is it not equally easy, to conceive, that they were then also present to his View, as sanctified? And that as so considered by him, they were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight.

(4.) Christ had a Prospect of his People, from everlasting, as perfectly holy, and consummately happy. He foresaw them, *in the Beauties of Holiness, from the Womb, before the Morning*, i. e. the earliest Part of Time (l). The Father blessed them with all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places in Christ. According, as he chose them in him, before the

(k) 2 Tim. i. 9.

(l) Psal. cx. 3.

the Foundation of the World. And, therefore, he then viewed them, as *all glorious within* (n). Or as possessed of that spotless Purity, which they will be the happy Subjects of, in the heavenly State. Eternal Life was promised to them, in him, before the Commencement of Time. *In hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie promised before the World began* (o). As the federal Transactions of the Father, and Christ, respecting the Elect, in Eternity past, provided for their being completely holy, and consummately happy, in Eternity to come: So the View, which Christ had of them, in the immeasurable Duration, of Eternity past, extended itself, unto the immeasurable Duration of Eternity to come. And from everlasting, he foresaw them, as possessed of that spotless Beauty, consummate Bliss, and inconceivable Glory, which they will be the Subjects of, in the heavenly Mansions. And, therefore, his Delights were then with them. Those eternal Thoughts which Christ had of his People, being with him, in Heaven to behold his Glory, were infinitely pleasing and delightful to him. That he had such Thoughts concerning them, from everlasting, cannot be scrupled, if it be allowed, that their final, and endless Bliss, was then agreed on, in Covenant, between the Father,

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and

(n) Psal. xlv. 13.

(o) Tit. i. 2.

and himself. Which, I hope, will not be doubted of.

If our Brethren will not deny, that Christ had such a Prospect of his People, from everlasting, in the Counsel, and Covenant of Peace: I would intreat them to consider, whether, it is more proper to say, that he pitied them, as he beheld them washed in his Blood, and so clear of all Guilt. As clothed with his Righteousness, and thereby constituted righteous. As beautified with the Graces of his Spirit. And as possessed of complete Holiness, consummate Bliss, and inconceivable Glory, for evermore: Or to say, that he delighted in them, as they were so viewed, and considered, by him. I cannot but think, that upon a *candid* and *impartial* Consideration of the Matter, they will grant, that it is more proper to say, that they were the Objects, of his Complacency and Delight, than of his Benevolence, Compassion or Pity: And if so, why should they object to the Doctrine of Christ's everlasting Delight, in his People, and represent it, in an odious Light. If it can be proved, that Christ had no such Prospect, of his People, in Eternity, I will immediately give up, what I have been pleading for. Because, I am persuaded, that Christ cannot take Pleasure, in his People, otherwise, than, as he views, or considers them washed in his Blood, cloth-

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ed with his Righteousness, sanctified by his Spirit, as perfectly holy, and completely happy, in the Enjoyment of himself. All which, were not only decreed concerning them; but federal Transactions passed, between the Father and Christ, in Eternity, relating to those important, and glorious Things. And, consequently, it is to be concluded, that the People of Christ, in the everlasting Covenant, were not only present to his View, as guilty, depraved, condemned, and miserable; but also, as clear of Guilt, constituted righteous, sanctified by his Grace, free from Condemnation, yea, as perfectly holy, and eternally happy, in the Fruition of his Father, and himself. Which View of them gave him infinite Pleasure and Delight: What is there in this, that should occasion us to think, that it is not *a Doctrine, according to Godliness*? Nothing at all. It does not suppose, that Christ delights in his People, considered, as unholy, or unlike to himself. It does not imply, that they may be happy, without being made holy; but the direct Contrary. Are not the Elect, meet and fit Objects of Christ's Delight, as washed in his Blood, clothed with his Righteousness, as *all glorious within*, and completely happy with himself, in the World above? Surely, it will be allowed, that they are. I will not pretend to maintain, that Christ delights in

the Persons of his People, *simply* considered. That is to say, considered, neither, as guilty, nor innocent, neither, as unholy, nor holy, neither, as miserable, nor happy. For, I think, it is impossible, that he ever should so consider them. Because it is not possible, that a reasonable Creature should exist, and be neither guilty, nor innocent, neither unholy, nor holy, neither miserable, nor happy.

What I am inclined to maintain, is this only : That the People of Christ, were the Objects of his Complacency and Delight, from everlasting, as he then beheld them, clear of Guilt, constituted righteous, made holy by his Spirit, and completely happy in his glorious Presence. If, in Eternity, he had no such View of them, I will grant, that he could not take Pleasure in them. But that he had such a Prospect of them, in Eternity, I think, the federal Transactions between the Father and himself, most clearly, and fully evince. Christ's View of his People, in the immeasurable Duration of Eternity past, extended itself, unto the immeasurable Duration of Eternity to come. And, therefore, as it is true, that Christ was the Object of the Father's eternal Delight, in the Capacity of Mediator : So it is an evangelical Truth, that the People of Christ, from everlasting, were the Objects of his infinite Complacency and Delight. That

is

The Church Christ's everlasting Delight. 29
is a Doctrine, which I conceive, cannot be
disproved, without overthrowing the Eter-
nity of the Covenant of Grace, which is
more stable and firm, than Mountains of
Brass. I conclude with the Doxology of the
Apostle Jude: *Now unto him that is able to keep
you from falling, and to present you faultless be-
fore the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding
Joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be Glory
and Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and
ever. Amen.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 8, Line 12, for *Witrius*, read *Witsius*.
In the Note, Line 2, for *qua*, read *sua*.



9 FE63

